

But there are several difficulties with this kind of test. We have already noted that universities themselves change and grow and adapt and evolve. Universities have differed in different periods. If, as Lord Haldane expressed it, "it is in the universities that... the soul of a people mirrors itself", it is unlikely that they will conform to any single pattern. If the university itself is so profoundly altered, what then of fixed university standards?

Moreover, Newman's yardstick and that of some who agree with him, is far from satisfactory to others. The test, that of qualities which "form and cultivate the intellect", which ignores most of the experiences afforded by the arts, is far removed from the kind of standard which other thoughtful people would apply. It is in the "Harvard Report", General education in a free society, that we find the judgment, "Precisely because they wear the warmth and colour of the senses the creative arts are perhaps the strongest and deepest of all the educative forces".¹⁸ Moreover, the rigid application of such a standard would rule out a great part of the modern university, not just the programme for adults. Flexner himself questioned if there was any place for most of the professional schools, although he did make some exceptions. Dr. R. C. Wallace described the pressure of "new knowledge" upon some professional courses: "In medicine, in engineering and in law there exists a real danger that with the burden of material the courses may become as definitely technical, and as little liberal, as are some of the newer courses whose admission into the Charmed Circle is being so sharply questioned".

In any professional training (and medicine is no exception) hours and hours are spent in practising certain techniques, in mastering certain kinds of information, in carrying out administrative routines, all necessary in the development of a professional worker, but far from intellectually stimulating. The same, of course, is true of a great deal of research and scholarly work itself.

Again, the application of this kind of a test could only be made if the work done in every university, from Vancouver to St. John's, were of the same quality. Or if all courses given within the university were equal in intellectual content. Such an assumption is far from true. In the symposium before the NCCU, to which reference has already been made, Dr. Andrew Stewart, President of the University of Alberta, reminded the audience that because of the circumstances of university organization, their traditions and special purposes, the needs, and indeed the demands, of the community or province in which they were established, no single test can ever be applied; each university will have to work out its own decisions.

Some observers have noted a curious phenomenon, that a different basis for judgment is sometimes applied to adult work than to that done in "regular" classes. As Paul McGhee, of New York University, put it:

Perhaps the largest number of the doubting Thomases in higher education [i.e. those who are critical of adult education] is composed of those who in one way or another are fearful that something deplorable is likely to happen to the "standards" of an institution if the "Ode to a Grecian Urn" is read after six o'clock to students who have remunerative employment, and who already have, or do not choose to seek, a university degree.¹⁹

Every one will agree that the shoddy, the useless, and the trifling ought to be kept out of the university. But, as Dr. Houle has pointed out, these are not, in any peculiar way, associated with adult education:

Triviality of thought...may come as a consequence of adult education, but there is nothing inherent in the age of the student which makes such a result necessary. Any study of the present educational scene may well lead one to conclude that some of the most conspicuous examples